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ABSTRACT

This document contains a statement of the Moline School District's language learning philosophy and goals, and articulates the district's philosophy of providing students with language learning skills necessary to become life-long learners. The document includes specific objectives and anticipated student outcomes for the following: life-long learning, life experiences, parental involvement, home/school/community cooperation, classroom environment, teachers as implementors and facilitators, language learning as a natural communication process, variety of teaching strategies, inclusion of literature and media, child-centered learning, and non-threatening natural assessment. (KEH)

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COMPREHENSIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

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MOLINE
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 40

Comprehensive Language Learning Philosophy

It is the mission of the staff of the Moline Public School District to prepare children to become life-long thinkers and learners. We believe language learning is a natural, active, social, and flexible process. Language learning is on-going and positive, providing skills necessary to become life-long learners and effective, contributing members of society.

Language learning is a communication process encompassing the tools of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking as they support and enhance each other. It is a natural, meaningful, purposeful process and must be practiced. One learns language by using language; one learns to write by writing, one learns to read by reading. Language learning, being a natural process, is dynamic, allowing for a variety of educational approaches and purposeful strategies that are contextual and experiential and should be incorporated across the curriculum. Being meaningful and purposeful, language learning involves the synthesis and application of new ideas and concepts gleaned from a rich selection of literature, personal experience, and other media.

As a natural process built upon previous experience and knowledge, effective language skills enable children to assimilate new information and communicate new ideas with others. The staff of the Moline Public School District recognizes the value and diversity of children's life experience and prior knowledge and seeks to integrate those experiences into the learning environment. The staff of the Moline Public School District also recognizes the important role of parenting in the early development of language and learning. Therefore, parents are seen as an integral part of their children's basic education. It is through parental modeling and neighborhood influences that children first develop language skills and attitudes toward learning that will effect them as learners and thinkers throughout their lives.

Consequently, the staff of the Moline Public School District believes language learning is a continuing, cooperative effort between home, school, and community.

Children have a natural curiosity and eagerness to learn, explore their world, and share their learning with each other. The school environment should be rich in literature, language, and communication where discussion with teachers and peers is an expected part of the learning process and where discussion is a two-way exchange of ideas. Classrooms and staff must provide children with equality of opportunity to share their learning experiences with one another.

Language learning is child-centered and based upon the belief that all children must experience success. Successful children build upon a solid foundation of positive self regard and self worth. Further, children become competent, confident readers, writers, and thinkers when they work in a secure environment. The language learning program must, therefore, promote the development of children's positive self-image allowing for freedom to make choices, take risks, make mistakes, and take ownership of their own learning in a supportive setting.

Successful delivery of an integrated, comprehensive language learning program requires cooperation and coordination between faculty, staff, and administration. To be effective, teachers must receive adequate resources as well as timely and appropriate in-servicing to update, refine, or develop new teaching skills. Teachers must also have the freedom to make choices from a variety of effective teaching strategies and be provided opportunities for faculty sharing of ideas. To facilitate provision of a language learning integrated curriculum, a teacher support network is encouraged to develop collegial support and generate the free flow of ideas.

Assessment is a natural, non-threatening, and important part of the educational process. It serves as an effective method of communicating children's progress and district performance to parents and community. Assessment is an on-going process and provides a means for determining the individual needs of children.

Moreover, assessment should be viewed as a tool for improvement of student learning. It should be strategy-oriented and innovative, focusing upon the processes rather than the products of learning. Furthermore, assessment should be both formal and informal and emphasize careful observation of student growth. Assessment should also reflect the priorities and instructional goals of the district and be driven by the district's language learning instructional program.

The staff of the Moline Public School District concludes that, to be successful in life and contribute to society, children must be connected to each other and their community. An effective language learning program serves to actively connect children with each other, the community, and new knowledge. Through the integration of meaningful reading, writing, speaking, and listening experiences, students' learning is connected to their world and they become life-long thinkers and learners.

MOLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 40

Comprehensive Language Learning Goals

1. The Moline Public School District believes that language learning should create life-long thinkers and independent learners. Therefore, we will:

   - instill in the child the desire to take responsibility for becoming an independent learner.
   - provide opportunities for the child to make choices and decisions in a secure environment.
   - motivate students to think creatively.
   - encourage the child to actively participate in solving problems by applying what has been learned to real life situations.

2. The Moline Public School District recognizes the importance of the child's life experiences. Therefore, we will:

   - build upon the child's background knowledge.
   - integrate the child's experiences into the learning environment.
   - provide opportunities for the child to share experiences and strategies through teaching others.

3. The Moline Public School District recognizes the importance of active parental involvement in the language learning program. Therefore, we will encourage parents to:

   - read aloud to their children daily.
   - discuss with their children what they have read.

- listen to their children read daily.
- make time to share their children's writing.
- instill a love of reading by being a reader.

4. The Moline Public School District believes language learning is a cooperative and coordinated effort between home, school, and community. Therefore, we will:
   - encourage open lines of communication.
   - incorporate flexible and appropriate learning strategies in the classroom.
   - provide a secure environment where children have the freedom to be risk-takers without fear of criticism.
   - offer opportunities for children to be contributing members of society.
5. The Moline Public School District believes the classroom environment should support the language learning process. Therefore, we will:
   - provide an abundance of meaningful reading and reference material.
   - utilize purposeful manipulatives.
   - incorporate various media.
   - allow furniture arrangements that accommodate flexible grouping.
6. The Moline Public School District recognizes the importance of the teacher as implementor and facilitator of the language learning program. Therefore, we will:
   - offer opportunities to attend appropriate inservice workshops.

- allocate needed resources to update on-going language learning strategies.

- endorse the freedom to use new and effective teaching strategies.

- provide opportunities for faculty and grade level sharing.

- encourage the establishment of a language learning support network.

- coordinate a cooperative effort between administration, faculty, and staff in the implementation and delivery of the language learning program.

7. The Moline School District believes that language learning is a communication process that encompasses the tools of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking. Therefore, the student will:

   - read, comprehend, interpret, evaluate and use written materials.

   - listen critically and analytically.

   - apply the writing process to communicate effectively for various purposes and audiences.

   - utilize spoken language effectively in formal and informal situations to communicate ideas.

   - think creatively, logically, and critically.

   - understand how and why language functions and evolves.

   - experience pleasure in literature which will foster habits of life-long reading.

   - participate in group sharing activities.

8. The Moline School District believes that language learning is a natural process and should be meaningful, purposeful, and must be practiced. Therefore, the student will:

   - participate in writers' and readers' workshops.
   - write often in journals, learning logs, and free-writing experiences.
   - read daily and participate in shared book experiences.
   - develop language skills naturally.
   - engage in reading and writing for real and meaningful purposes.

9. The Moline School District believes educators should use a variety of educational approaches that incorporate purposeful strategies. Therefore, we will:

   - read to children daily, utilize shared book experiences, and guide reading experiences.
   - encourage individual reading.
   - model the reading and writing process across the curriculum.
   - encourage creative problem solving.
   - foster cooperative learning through flexible grouping.
   - provide experiences that allow students to learn by doing.

10. The Moline School District believes that language learning should involve a synthesis and application of new ideas and concepts gleaned from a rich selection of literature and other media. Therefore, we will:

    - foster the use of higher level critical and creative thinking skills.

- maintain a variety of books and other media within classrooms and libraries.

- use meaningful reading materials rather than contrived, isolated excerpts.

- introduce various forms of significant literature representative of cultures, eras, and ideas.

11. The Moline School District believes language learning is child-centered and success-oriented, enabling students to take ownership of their learning. Therefore, we will:

    - use individual learning strategies to enhance ownership of individual learning.

    - allow choices concerning what is read and written.

    - assure successful experiences to motivate learning.

    - develop an understanding that mastery of communication skills enhances and extends personal success.

12. The Moline School District believes language learning requires appropriate, non-threatening, and natural assessment strategies. Therefore, we will:

    - observe students in their natural learning environment as they read, write, listen, speak, and think.

    - allow responses which include more than one right answer and/or divergent thinking.

    - interact with students as they engage in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking.

13. The Moline School District believes language learning assessment shall reflect the priorities of the language learning instructional goals of the district. Therefore, we will:

- develop child-centered and process oriented assesssment procedures.

- assume the responsibility of developing an assessment plan which measures the goals and objectives of the language learning program.

14. The Moline School District believes the language learning assessment program shall focus on the process of learning and becoming literate. Therefore, we will:

    - frequently observe students actively engaged in the processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking.

    - observe students' metacognitive strategies as they interact with text to create meaning.

    - recognize students' ability to apply metacognitive strategies.